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Feedback on the **Spanish Language Arts and Reading**

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

1. Does each grade level or course follow a complete and logical development of Spanish language arts and reading concepts?

In order to provide specific opportunities related to the logical development of collaboration skills in a variety of contexts the Collaboration strand could provide more specific guidelines across the grade levels. For example, K.4 A currently states that students are expected to “follow agreed-upon rules for discussion, including taking turns and speaking one at a time.”

Suggestion: change to “follow agreed-upon rules for discussion including taking turns and speaking one at a time in small interactive structures including pairs and triads”.

In first grade, pairs and triads could be combined or followed by larger groups.

It is not clear if the intent of the “Composition and Presentation” strand is to focus on both, writing and presentation skills. The first grade objectives included under this strand for example, focus mainly on conventions of language. Only the 1.11 (X, Y, Y, and Z) make reference to presentation skills.

The Collaboration strand in grades 1 and 2 include the same identical objectives (word by word). This strand differs considerably from the description and expectations included in the English version when comparing the same grade levels

2. Have the correct vocabulary and terminology been used throughout the TEKS?

Comment: Because of their cultural connotation, some words are better understood **in** Spanish. Example: trabalenguas, palíndromos y adivinanzas and could be included in the following objective: 3.1 (O): identify and apply playful uses of language such as tongue twisters, palindromes, and riddles;

3. Is the level of rigor appropriate for each grade level?

The strand of Collaboration seems to be inconsistent in terms of its description and the expectations that follow. In Kindergarten, for example, this strand indicates that “**students prepare for and participate productively in diverse interactions building on others’ ideas and expressing their own viewpoints clearly in a variety of contexts**”. The expectations under this strand, however, only state that students will “follow agreed upon rules for discussion, including taking turns and speaking one at a

time” and “listen attentively by facing speakers and asking questions to clarify information”.

In other words, the expectation to participate productively is not that explicit. If we compare this strand (**Collaboration**) in the Spanish Language Arts and Reading TEKS with the same strand in the English Language Arts and Reading TEKS for grades Kindergarten and First grade for example, one will notice that the strand in Spanish only includes 2 expectations while the same strand in the English TEKS for the same grade levels includes at least 4 expectations.

4. Are the student expectations (SEs) clear and specific?

One of the strands: COMPREHENSION for 3rd grade includes many more expectations when compared to the other grade levels. Under “Comprehension: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing using Multiple Texts. Students use metacognitive skills to comprehend increasingly complex texts.” There are a total of 44 expectations ranging from A to RR. Skills such as making predictions, inferences, drawing conclusions, etc. are **repeated** and can be collapsed.

Suggestion: 1.11 M currently reads: “identify and read abbreviations such as Sr. and Sra.” **Change to** “identify, read, and use abbreviations such as Sr. and Sra.”

5. Are the TEKS aligned horizontally and vertically? If not, what gaps should be addressed?

See comments included in other sections of this document.

6. Can all student expectations reasonably be taught within the amount of time typically allotted for the grade level or high school course prior to the end of the school year or prior to a state assessment?

YES (if redundancy is addressed).

7. Are there student expectations that can be eliminated in order to streamline the standards?

Suggestion: I suggest that the following two strands included within the Framework can be combined: Comprehension and Response. There seems to be redundancy in both strands. There is no significant difference in the way they currently read. Another idea is to infuse all strands with opportunities to respond as it has been done with the Multiple Genres strand. The Multiple Genres strand for example, already includes objectives that require students to “read and respond”.

Rationale: Skills included under “Response” such as 3.3 (a) “discuss and record predictions”, 3.3 (B) “create and share questions...”, 3.3 (E) “explain inferences” are already embedded in other strands.

8. Are there specific areas that need to be updated to reflect current research?

The Collaboration strand could be modified to reflect an emphasis on “productive participation” or “collaborative task completion or collaborative problem solving”. The literature refers to this as “collaborative languaging” a term that may be appropriate for the purposes of this strand. In its current state, this strand includes some expectations such as 3.4 (A), and (C) which state:

- (A) use comprehension skills to listen attentively to others in formal and informal settings;
- (B) listen attentively to speakers, ask relevant questions, and make pertinent comments;
- (C) follow, restate, and give oral instructions that involve a series of related sequences of action;
- (D) use conventions of language such as speaking coherently about the topic under discussion, employing eye contact, speaking rate, volume, enunciation to communicate ideas effectively;

For example, only one of the 3rd grade level expectations in the Collaboration strand directly addresses “productive participation”: 3.4 E “work productively with others in teams, participate in teacher- and student-led discussions by posing and answering questions with appropriate detail and by providing suggestions that build upon the ideas of others.”

9. Are the College and Career Readiness Standards adequately and appropriately addressed throughout the TEKS?

Yes

10. Do you have any other suggestions for ways in which the English language arts and reading TEKS can be improved?

Suggestion: Rewrite expectation 3.1 F:

Current: “write words that have a prosodic or orthographic accent, palabras agudas, such as feliz and canción, y graves such as casa and árbol;”

Proposed: “write words that have a prosodic or orthographic accent, palabras agudas, such as feliz and canción, and palabras graves such as casa and árbol;

In grades 3-6. the following strand: Composition and Presentation includes the following expectation: C) use the complete subject and predicate in a sentence to form simple, complex, and compound sentences with correct subject-verb agreement;

Suggestion: Include an expectation that acknowledges that use of “tacit subject” in the Spanish language. For example, it is common to use expressions such as: “Salimos tarde”, comimos cabrito, etc. which are grammatically correct even though they omit the subject.

Suggestion: Change 3.7 from “write about important personal experiences;” to “write about experiences of personal significance”

Letters “b” and “v”

According to La Real Academia Española (see <http://www.rae.es/diccionario-panhispanico-de-dudas/representacion-de-sonidos>), both letters “b” and “v” are represented by the same sound: /b/. The proposed TEKS, however, include an expectation in Kindergarten: 1 (P) “Use phonological knowledge to match sounds to individual letters or syllables such as “b” and “v”. This implies that “b” and “v” have different sounds in Spanish, when in fact they don’t.

In the current TEKS (or the ones soon to be old), there is an objective that actually includes “b” and “v” as part of words that have “same sounds represented by different letters”. **What would be the reasons for this being change?**

Digraph “rr”

In the revised first grade TEKS the digraph “rr” is sometimes referred to as a “letter”. La Real Academia Española makes a distinction between letters and digraphs. In Spanish, there are 27 letters and “rr” is not one of them.

One more example of the use of ‘rr’ in the revised TEKS Objective 3.1 (J) which indicates that the student is expected to: “develop automatic recognition, monitor accuracy, and spell to mastery words that have the same sounds represented by different letters including “r” and “rr,” as in ratón and perro.

Additional feedback based on comments from colleagues and bilingual educators:

✓✓ Difference between English and Spanish TEKS

- The verbiage used in the English TEKS and the Spanish TEKS seems to differ. The verbiage used in the English TEKS appears to be at a higher level than what is used in the Spanish TEKS. For example, why are the verbs used in the English version that relate to comprehension, response, author's purpose etc. at a higher blooms level than the Spanish?
- When we try to compare, we are going to have a very difficult time determining what TEKS are taught in both and which TEKS are only taught in one or the other language. This is also going to have a big impact on assessment. For example, when students are taking a reading CBA or benchmark, we try to assess the same TEKS. The way each of these is currently structured, there will not be matching TEKS. The only I can think of is we will need to be very knowledgeable about both and match concepts.
- Bilingual/dual language teachers are required to teach in English and Spanish. A document is needed that shows teachers similarities and differences between the two languages. TEKS related to this are needed.

✓✓ Ryme

Rhyme in Spanish is not the building block that it is in English. The emphasis on rhyme in the kinder TEKS does not take into consideration its lesser importance in Spanish.

✓✓ **Compound words**

Spanish has few compound words that are part of students' everyday language. The emphasis on compound words should be moved to a different grade level.

✓✓ **Upper and lower case letters**

The kinder Spanish LA has students identifying upper and lowercase letters, but we know research shows they need to know the letter sounds, and teaching letter identification can inhibit Spanish literacy in early elementary.

✓✓ **Phonological Awareness**

KS 1 and 2 need to follow more closely the way literacy in Spanish is developed. We know from Escamilla, 2009 that phonological awareness in Spanish is best developed through writing and analysis of written language. As children write and reflect on their writing they analyze speech. This is not emphasized enough in KS 1 and 2. Many of the SEs are repeated within the two strands.

✓✓ **Redundancy**

Divide the standards into three blocks: Word Study, Reading and Writing. All standards fall into these three categories. By taking the strands and having the teachers place them under the appropriate category teachers have been able to see where the redundancy lies within their State standards. For example, in first grade where most of the redundant TEKS are found, teachers were able to see that the exact same standard we saw in phonics, may be found under phonic awareness, then again in spelling and yet again in conventions. This is one reason they are feeling overwhelmed. The exact same standard is repeated four times.

✓✓ **Adjectives**

5th grade, (7) adjectives - they suggest the "más mejor" example... Not correct. It is redundant. The correct form is "mucho mejor o simplemente mejor".

✓✓ **Syllables and phonemes**

There is an emphasis on separating syllables into phonemes.

For example, on p 5 the TEKS indicate that students:

blend spoken phonemes to form syllables and words such as /m/ ... /a/ says ma, ma-pa says "mapa" (e.g., /m/ ... /a/ says ma, ma-pa says "mapa");

The following statement indicates that students are expected to separate the words into two to three syllables.

p 5, 14

separate spoken multi-syllabic words into two to three syllables such as /to/ /ma/ /te/ (e.g., /to/ /ma/ /te/).—What if they have four syllables?

✓✓ **Use of verbs that are vague such as “understand”**

What does “understand” mean in this context? How do you understand a digraph? Are they supposed to know what sound those digraphs make? Recognize them? In the next

item, the digraph “ll” is mentioned, but the students are supposed to “understand the concept that “ll” and “y” have the same sound.

p. 5

Understand the digraphs /ch/, /rr/ such as chico, chile, perro, carro ;

✓✓ **Why get rid of the CV, VC, CVC, CVCV, and CVC?**

pp. 5-6, 15

use knowledge of consonant/vowel sound relationships to decode syllables and words in text and independent of content (e.g., ~~CV, VC, CVC, CVCV~~ words); and

i) ~~open~~-by syllable such as mes, sol, el, ma-no, bo-ca, co-ci-na,

ii) ~~closed syllable (CVC) such as;~~

✓✓ **Familias de Palabras**

Include familias de palabras (zapato, zapatero, zapatería, etc.) as mentioned in Darla’s comment in discussion forum.

✓✓ **Use of dash**

In 1st grade the dash is identified as simply a dash (guión). In subsequent grades, it’s identified as the em dash and the term *guión* is not given. Is this intentional?

p. 14

recognize the distinguishing features of a sentence (e.g. such as capitalization of first word, beginning and ending punctuation, the ~~em~~-dash (guión) to indicate dialogue);

p. 25 grade 2

distinguish features of a sentence including capitalization of first word, beginning and ending punctuation, commas, quotation marks, and em dash to indicate dialogue .

✓✓ **Skills integration**

Although it may seem appropriate for the general English dominant student, integration of skills must be cautiously adopted as an approach to teach language arts and reading to bilingual learners. English language learners benefit from targeted, deliberate instruction in each one of the domains of language (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). If the strands proposed are to stay, then it would be useful to clearly indicate which objectives address each one of the language domains.

✓✓ **Handwriting**

Cursive and print are introduced in the third grade. Why is this skill not present in the early grade?